

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (Thrice Amended) An apparatus for facilitating vascular access comprising:

- a) a vascular access port defining an elongated tubular body of predetermined length with a central lumen having opposed proximal and distal end portions and an inner diameter, the distal end portion adapted and configured for introduction into a blood vessel and defining a flat annular distal end surface; and
- b) an elongated cylindrical plug body dimensioned and configured for insertion into the central lumen of the vascular access port and ready removal therefrom to permit access to the blood vessel, the plug body having a length that is substantially equal to the length of the vascular access port, a flat circular distal end surface and an outer diameter that is substantially equal to the inner diameter of the lumen so as to prevent blood flow between the outer diameter of the plug body and the inner diameter of the lumen of the access port when the plug body is engaged therein and the flat annular distal end surface of the access port is coplanar with the flat circular distal end surface of the plug body.

2. (Original) An apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein a handle portion is associated with a proximal end of the elongated cylindrical plug body to facilitate installation and removal of the plug body.

3. (Original) An apparatus as recited in claim 2, wherein a locking mechanism is associated with the proximal end of the elongated cylindrical plug body for coupling the plug body to the vascular access port.

4. (Original) An apparatus as recited in claim 3, wherein the plug body, handle portion and locking mechanism are formed monolithically.

5. (Original) An apparatus as recited in claim 3, wherein the plug body, handle portion and locking mechanism are integral with one another.

6. (Original) An apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein a locking mechanism is adjacent to and attached to the elongated cylindrical plug body for coupling the plug body to the vascular access port.

7. (Original) An apparatus as recited in claim 6, wherein the plug body and locking mechanism are formed monolithically with one another.

8. (Original) An apparatus as recited in claim 6, wherein the plug body, and locking mechanism are integral with one another.

9. (Original) An apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the elongated cylindrical plug body has an outer diameter that is substantially equal to an inside diameter of the lumen of the vascular access port.

10. (Original) An apparatus as recited in claim 2, wherein the handle portion extends radially outward from an outer diameter of the plug body.

11. (Original) An apparatus as recited in claim 6, wherein the locking mechanism comprises means for sealingly engaging the vascular access port.

12. (Original) An apparatus as recited in claim 11, wherein the locking means comprises helical threads.

13. (Withdrawn) An apparatus as recited in claim 12, wherein the helical threads extend radially beyond the outer diameter of the elongated cylindrical plug body.

14. (Withdrawn) An apparatus as recited in claim 11, wherein the locking means includes a luer lock fitting.

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15. (Withdrawn) An apparatus as recited in claim 11, wherein the locking mechanism comprises at least one protuberance on the proximal end of the plug body adapted and configured for insertion into a corresponding recess disposed at the proximal end of the vascular access port.

16. (Cancelled) An apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the elongated cylindrical plug body has a central core to increase flexibility of the plug body.

17. (Withdrawn) An apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein a fitting is provided at the proximal end of the elongated cylindrical plug body for facilitating locking.

18. (Withdrawn) An apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the proximal end of the elongated cylindrical plug body is fluted to provide a friction fit.

19. (Withdrawn) An apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the proximal end of the elongated cylindrical plug body is knurled to provide an interference fit.

20. (Withdrawn) A vascular access system comprising:

a) a first vascular access port for providing ingress of fluid into a blood vessel, defining an elongated tubular body of predetermined length with a central lumen having opposed proximal and distal end portions, the distal end portion adapted and configured for introduction into a blood vessel;

b) a second vascular access port for providing egress of fluid from a blood vessel, defining an elongated tubular body of predetermined length with a central lumen having opposed proximal and distal end portions, the distal end portion adapted and configured for introduction into a blood vessel;

c) a first elongated cylindrical plug body dimensioned and configured for insertion into the central lumen of the first vascular access port, the first plug body having a length substantially equal to the length of the first vascular access port, so as to prevent blood flow into the lumen of the first access port when the plug is engaged therein; and

d) a second elongated cylindrical plug body dimensioned and configured for insertion into the central lumen of the second vascular access port, the second plug body having a length substantially equal to the length of the second vascular access port, so as to prevent blood flow into the lumen of the second access port when the plug is engaged therein.

21. (Withdrawn) A kit comprising:

a) a vascular access port defining an elongated tubular body of predetermined length with a central lumen having opposed proximal and distal end portions, the distal end portion adapted and configured for introduction into a blood vessel;

b) an elongated cylindrical plug body dimensioned and configured for insertion into the central lumen of the vascular access port, the plug body having a length substantially equal to the length of the vascular access port, so as to prevent blood flow into the lumen of the access port when the plug is engaged therein; and

c) an enclosure, adapted and configured to support a vascular access port and an elongated cylindrical plug body.

22. (Withdrawn) A kit as recited in claim 21, further comprising a stabilizer pad having a central hole adapted and configured to allow insertion over a vascular access port and adhesively attached to a patient's skin.

23. (Withdrawn) A kit as recited in claim 21, wherein the enclosure is adapted and configured to support a stabilizer pad.

24. (Withdrawn) A kit as recited in claim 21, wherein the enclosure is adapted and configured to support a connector assembly and conduit.

25. (Twice Amended) An apparatus for facilitating vascular access comprising:

a) a vascular access port defining an elongated tubular body of predetermined length with a central lumen bounded by a continuous, uninterrupted outer wall, the tubular body having opposed proximal and distal end portions, the distal end portion adapted and configured for introduction into a blood vessel and defining a flat annular distal end surface;

b) an elongated cylindrical plug body dimensioned and configured for insertion into the central lumen of the vascular access port, the plug body having a length that is substantially equal to the length of the vascular access port and a flat circular distal end surface so as to prevent blood flow into the lumen of the access port when the plug body is engaged therein and the flat annular distal end surface of the access port is coplanar with the flat circular distal end surface of the plug body; and

c) a locking mechanism associated with the proximal end of the elongated cylindrical plug body for releasably coupling the plug body to the vascular access port.

26. (Previously Added) An apparatus as recited in claim 25, wherein a handle portion is associated with a proximal end of the elongated cylindrical plug body to facilitate installation and removal of the plug body.

27. (Previously Added) An apparatus as recited in claim 26, wherein the plug body, handle portion and locking mechanism are formed monolithically.

28. (Previously Added) An apparatus as recited in claim 26, wherein the plug body, handle portion and locking mechanism are integral with one another.

29. (Previously Added) An apparatus as recited in claim 25, wherein the elongated cylindrical plug body has an outer diameter that is substantially equal to an inside diameter of the lumen of the vascular access port.

30. (Previously Added) An apparatus as recited in claim 25, wherein the handle portion extends radially outward from an outer diameter of the plug body.

31. (Previously Added) An apparatus as recited in claim 25, wherein the locking mechanism comprises means for sealingly engaging the vascular access port.

32. (Presently Amended) An apparatus as recited in claim 34 25, wherein the locking ~~means~~ mechanism comprises helical threads.

33. (Cancelled) An apparatus as recited in claim 25, wherein the elongated cylindrical plug body has a central core to increase flexibility of the plug body.